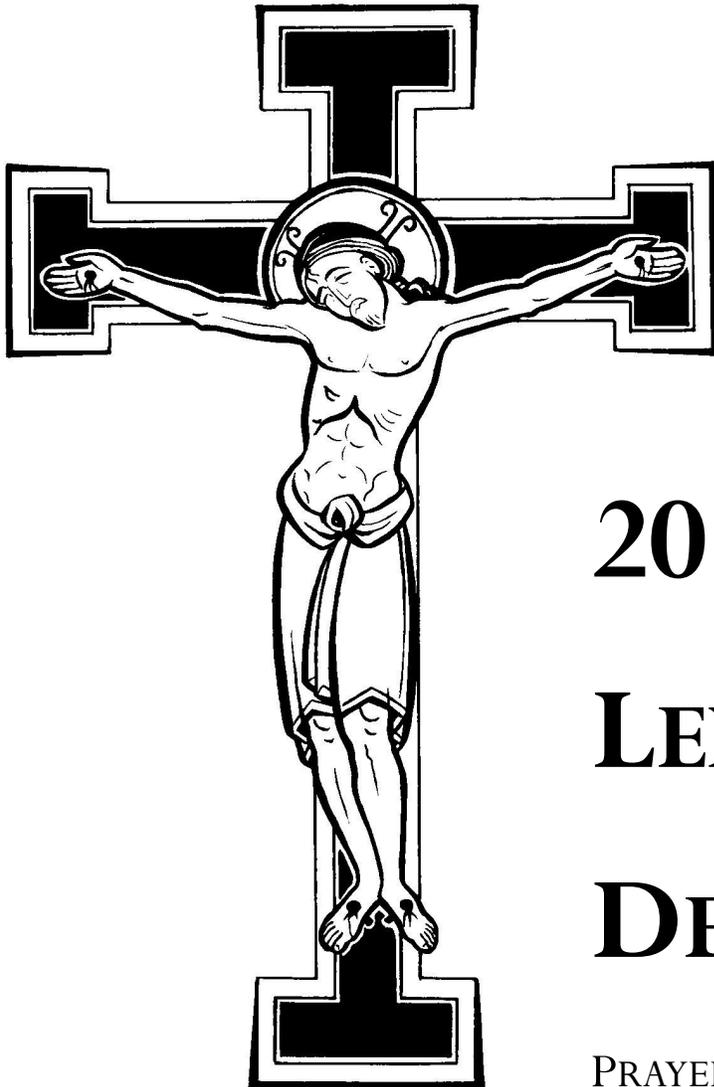


ST. VINCENT'S CATHEDRAL



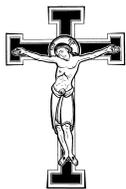
2013

LENTEN

DEVOTIONS

PRAYER, MEDITATION & STUDY

MAKING JESUS CHRIST KNOWN IN ALL THAT WE DO



ST. VINCENT'S CATHEDRAL 2013 LENTEN DEVOTIONS

The Season of Lent is a time of preparation to help us to enter into once again the story of Jesus Christ during that first Holy Week. The spiritual disciplines of prayer, fasting, almsgiving, and study are the tools we are given to use to make that preparation effective.

During Holy Week, we hear again with fresh ears the triumphal entry of our Lord, the New Passover meal in the Upper Room, and the Passion, Death, and Resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

In prayer, meditation, and study of God's Word, we can each prepare ourselves for a truly "Holy" Week.

The meditations in this book have been prepared prayerfully by different members, friends, and the clergy of St. Vincent's. I pray that these words will speak to your heart and help you in the observance of a holy Lent as well.

If you would like to provide a copy of these devotions to family or friends, please contact the parish office for additional copies.

The Very Reverend Ryan Reed
Dean of St. Vincent's Cathedral
Bedford, Texas



ASH WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 13TH

KEEPING A DEVOUT AND HOLY LENT

Today we begin a spiritual journey together called Lent. It is a pilgrimage that we will pursue for the next six weeks. It begins in ashes and penitence; it will end in alleluias and Easter joy. It begins with a somber reminder of our mortality; it will end with a joyous celebration of our immortality in Jesus Christ. Ash Wednesday reminds us of what we deserve in our sinfulness – judgment and death. Easter reminds us of God’s gracious gift to us in Jesus Christ – forgiveness and new life in Him.

As with any journey, there is a certain amount of uncertainty about what lies ahead. None of us can know for certain what we must undergo in the weeks ahead - what temptations or tragedies we must endure, or what challenges and opportunities await us. Life is unpredictable and fragile. Sometimes the journey becomes dangerous and difficult in unexpected ways.

In our Christian pilgrimage, Lent reminds us that we must choose many times a day. Life involves continual decisions and choices, which determine which way we will go. We must make decisions every day about what we will do and about what we will not do. We must do the right thing, and we must avoid the wrong thing. The path we choose in the days ahead, in little things and in great things, will either lead us closer to God or more distant from Him.

To strengthen and guide us in what lies ahead, the Church calls upon each of us to adopt a Lenten Rule of Life – a discipline we will live by for the next six weeks. It will help us keep a devout and holy Lent. It involves taking on certain specific things and giving up certain other things in order to strengthen our will power, to co-operate with God’s power. It is a choice to simplify our lives and to pursue such things on a day to day basis, which, in the end, will bring us closer to God and to His will for our lives.

As with any journey, we will need food and drink to nourish and sustain us along the way. So a Lenten Rule may involve receiving Holy Communion more often than usual, perhaps coming to a weekday Communion service in addition to our Sunday worship. Surely we will want to read and study the Holy Scriptures more diligently than usual, feeding daily on God’s Word as our daily bread. Surely we will want to practice the three spiritual disciplines which Jesus himself practiced and commended to His disciples – fasting, prayer and almsgiving. All these things will help us and guide us in our Lenten journey.

Lord, give us the gift of holy discipline this Lent, that by your grace, we may do those things we ought to do and avoid those things that are harmful to us and our relationship with you. Save us from all wrong choices, and enable us by your Spirit to please you in word and deed, through Jesus Christ who saves us. AMEN.

The Rt. Rev. Jack Leo Iker
Bishop of Fort Worth

Psalms 32, 95, 102, 130, 143. Jonah 3:1-4:11. Hebrews 12:1-14. Luke 18:9-14.



THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 14TH

LET'S GET WITH GOD'S PROGRAM

Deuteronomy 7: 6-11

For you are a holy people to the Lord your God . . . Know therefore that your God is a faithful God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and his commandments, to a thousand generations and requites to their face those who hate him . . . You shall therefore be careful to keep the commandments and the statutes and the ordinance, which I command you this day.

God loves us, He chose us, He is a faithful God who has us in His care. We know this. We have been taught this from childhood: "Jesus loves me this I know, for the Bible tells me so."

In reading these verses from Deuteronomy we also should realize that we have the responsibility to love Him back. We do this by keeping his commandments and trying to live a more "Christ like" life.

There are many ways we can show our love for God by doing unto others as we would have them do unto us, taking care of the sick and those in need, praying, meditating, etc .

In reading and preparing for my own journey through Lent this year I came across the suggestion that we should take this time to set aside some of the busyness in our lives and concentrate more on God. I'm not sure God necessarily wants us to give up TV, cokes, or our cell phones to make us miserable, but rather to give up things that free our time so we can spend more time with Him.

We at St. Vincent's have many opportunities. During Lent we have Stations of the Cross which is always a good reminder of what Lent is all about. Stations is on Wednesdays at 6:00. It is followed by dinner which frees up your time because you won't have to cook. After dinner you can participate in a group discussion about the sermon. This will help you to remember the message. Several Bible Studies are available during the week and there are Adult Forum classes on Sundays. Lent just started yesterday, so I encourage you to add something that can help you become closer to God this Lent.

After Lent there is the L.I.F.E. series on Wednesday nights which I believe is a "hidden jewel". Coming at 6:00 you can enjoy dinner, which frees you from having to prepare it, and then participate in a prayer service with a short homily and a discussion of what we just heard.

Our heavenly Father, grant me this day some new vision of thy truth; inspire me with the spirit of joy and gladness; and make me the cup of strength to suffering souls; in the name of the strong Deliverer, our only Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. AMEN

Polly Post

Retired School Teacher/ Bookkeeper

Psalm 37:1-18, 19-42. Deuteronomy 7: 6-11; Titus 1:1-16. John 1:29-34.



FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 15TH

John 1: 35-42

35 The next day John was there again with two of his disciples. 36 When he saw Jesus passing by, he said, "Look, the Lamb of God!" 37 When the two disciples heard him say this, they followed Jesus. 38 Turning around, Jesus saw them following and asked, "What do you want?" They said, "Rabbi" (which means Teacher), "where are you staying?" 39 "Come," he replied, "and you will see." So they went and saw where he was staying, and spent that day with him. It was about the tenth hour. 40 Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, was one of the two who heard what John had said and who had followed Jesus. 41 The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, "We have found the Messiah" (that is, the Christ). 42 And he brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, "You are Simon son of John. You will be called Cephas" (which, when translated, is Peter).

I would love to have been one of the disciples and to spend the day with Jesus. Can you imagine how wonderful it was for them to be in his presence? To see his beauty and experience his holiness and to immediately recognize what they had found and that it would change everything. It is no wonder that their lives were changed as have ours.

As I read this, I remembered Jesus' words "I am with you always". He has given us his words in the Scriptures, our food in the Eucharist, and his face in our fellow human beings. We have everything we need to feel his presence in our lives. He is with us everyday. All we have to do is be quiet, listen, and be aware.

Jesus' presence makes every moment of our lives meaningful.

Dear Lord, thank you for your continual presence in our lives. May we always be open to you and your guidance. Speak in our words, think in our thoughts, and work in all our deeds. Lord, we love you. AMEN.

Julie Dowden
Nurse

Charles Dowden
Banker

Psalm 31, 35, 95. Deuteronomy 7: 12 – 16. Titus 2: 1 – 15. John 1: 35 - 42



SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 16TH

DENY THE DISTRACTIONS

Deuteronomy 7: 17-26

"If you say in your heart, 'These nations are greater than I; how can I dispossess them?' you shall not be afraid of them, but you shall remember what the LORD your God did to Pharaoh and to all Egypt, the great trials which your eyes saw, the signs, the wonders, the mighty hand, and the outstretched arm, by which the LORD your God brought you out; so will the LORD your God do to all the peoples of whom you are afraid. Moreover the LORD your God will send hornets among them, until those who are left and hide themselves from you are destroyed. You shall not be in dread of them; for the LORD your God is in the midst of you, a great and terrible God. The LORD your God will clear away these nations before you little by little; you may not make an end of them at once, lest the wild beasts grow too numerous for you. But the LORD your God will give them over to you, and throw them into great confusion, until they are destroyed. And he will give their kings into your hand, and you shall make their name perish from under heaven; not a man shall be able to stand against you, until you have destroyed them. The graven images of their gods you shall burn with fire; you shall not covet the silver or the gold that is on them, or take it for yourselves, lest you be ensnared by it; for it is an abomination to the LORD your God. And you shall not bring an abominable thing into your house, and become accursed like it; you shall utterly detest and abhor it; for it is an accursed thing.

We believe the early portion of today's reading serves to bolster the encouragement we provide to our children for them to believe what they believe because it's in their hearts. This is easy when Christianity is in the majority, but in the future, this may not always be the case, due to a number of potential scenarios. No matter where we are, even if surrounded by those who don't believe as we do, we shouldn't be afraid—God will take care of us.

In today's world, there are many images, idols, and distractions that do nothing to glorify God, in fact—just the opposite—Satan has created many temptations that can draw us from our relationship with God. It's easier to let things into our homes than to take a stand and refuse to conform to society's "new normal" or what society says is now acceptable. It takes being grounded in God's word and a conscious decision to stand against these evils, which are an abomination to the Lord. We must remain vigilant and control what crosses the threshold into our homes, especially with young children who are impressionable and often simply want what their friends have or can consume.

Dear Lord, please provide us the strength to follow your example while we teach others who look to us for guidance to do the same. Give us the courage to stand up for your way and the wisdom to explain our beliefs and decisions to others. We will remain diligent in our battle to prevent these idols and images from taking hold in our homes. In your name we pray, Lord. AMEN.

Jason W. Mraz
Account Executive

Andria Mraz
R.N., School Nurse

Psalm 30, 32, 42, 43. Deuteronomy 7:17-26. Titus 3:1-15. John 1:43-51



SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 17TH

JOYFUL NOISE

My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness, and my mouth shall praise YOU with joyful lips. Psalm 63, Verse 5

With trumpets and the sound of a horn; shout joyfully before the LORD, the King. Psalm 98, Verse 6

Bless the LORD, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless His holy name! Bless the LORD, you his angles, Who excel in strength, who do His word, Heeding the voice of His word. Bless the LORD, all you His hosts, You ministers of His, who do His pleasure. Bless the LORD, all His works, In all places of His Dominion. Bless the LORD, O my soul! Psalm 103, Verses 1, 20-22

That, as it is written, "He who glories, let him glory in the LORD." 1 Corinthians 1:31

"But new wine must be put into new wineskins." Mark 2:22

If you take the time to read all the passages, you hear the sound of true joy and how this new attitude **cannot** be contained by the old relationship with the LORD from the Old Testament. I began this meditation with wondering why these joyful sections were placed in Lent, then I realized why. This height of happiness is necessary for Lent.

Most of us know do not know the true joy in our relationships with the LORD. We all bless and thank him when he fixes our worries, or solves our problems. But that comes more from relief than from true joy. Jesus is going to die on the cross for us, but we **cannot** feel the depth of sorrow unless we can also feel the true joy on the top of the mountain.

Our family went to Disney World one time when my girls were in elementary school. It is my favorite place in the world and my children had never known the magic. We prayed as a family in the car and invited Jesus on our vacation with us to enjoy our family and our happiness. It was like being so happy that you swing your child around in a circle while laughing. It was a magnificent trip where we were all extremely happy. We felt him with us. Have you reached the height of joy with Jesus? It makes his sacrifice deeper in meaning.

Most merciful Father, help us to become joyful in our lives with your presence. Please take away our false joy and take us to the top of your mountain. We need your happiness to make our lives stronger in our faith. AMEN

Marilyn Keith
Retired Teacher

Psalm 63:1-8, 9-11, 98, 103. Deuteronomy 8:1-10. I Corinthians 1:17-31. Mark 2:18-22



MONDAY, FEBRUARY 18TH

DON'T FORGET ABOUT GOD

Deuteronomy 8:11-20

Be careful that you do not forget the Lord your God, failing to observe his commands, his laws and his decrees that I am giving you this day. Otherwise, when you eat and are satisfied, when you build fine houses and settle down, and when your herds and flocks grow large and your silver and gold increase and all you have is multiplied, then your heart will become proud and you will forget the Lord your God. But remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth.

The verses of Deuteronomy 8:11-20 are an emphasis on the danger of forgetting that God alone has given us all we have. As sinners, and in a time when it seems we always want something, we tend to forget where it came from when we get it. We tend to be tempted to forget God when we are satisfied, when the bills are paid and when we have happy lives. It is when we are unhappy, hungry and cold that we then turn to God. Forgetting God carries with it awful consequences, not the least which is idolatry. James Wolfendale commented "if true God forgotten, another will be chosen, for we must have a God". We should always be mindful that all things come from God because He loves us and that lives blessings can be taken away if they cause our thoughts of Him to diminish and our love of Him to cool.

Most merciful Father, help us never forget that all the many blessings in our lives are gifts from you. We are so busy and in a constant state of want that we easily forget that you are always watching us and taking care of us. Without your love, mercies and blessings, we would have nothing. Help us to be thankful for the blessings of this life and to cherish those we love. AMEN.

David Johnson,
Global Equipment Buyer, Whole Foods Markets
Verger & Jr. Warden

Psalm 41, 42, 44. Deuteronomy 8:11-20. Hebrews 2:11-18. John 2:1-12



TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 19TH

GOD WILL TAKE CARE OF ALL OUR NEEDS

John 2:13-22

The Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus "went up to Jerusalem." In the temple he found those who were selling oxen and sheep and pigeons, and the money-changers sitting there. And making a whip of cords, he drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and oxen. And he poured out the coins of the money-changers and overturned their tables. And he told those who sold the pigeons, "take these things away, do not make "my Father's house a house of trade. His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for your house will consume me." So the Jews said to him, "What sign do you show us for doing these things?" Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." The Jews then said, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will you raise it up in three days?" But he was speaking about the temple of his body. When therefore he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they believed the Scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.

How many times do we put material possessions ahead of God? We often forget that God has promised to provide for all our needs. We are also guilty of not thanking God for our many blessings. When God answers our prayers what is the first thought we have? Let the first thought we have is to thank God.

Dear Heavenly Father, Help us to follow your will and always be grateful for your love and the many blessings you bestow upon us. AMEN

Shirley Dansby
Retired

Psalm 45, 47, 48. Deuteronomy 9:4-12. Hebrews 3:1-11. John 2:13-22.



WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 20TH

ON THE STRAIGHT & NARROW... RIGHT

Hebrews 3:12-19

Take care, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God. But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called "today," that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. For we share in Christ, if only we hold our first confidence firm to the end, while it is said, "Today, when you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion." Who were they that heard and yet were rebellious? Was it not all those who left Egypt under the leadership of Moses? And with whom was he provoked forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the wilderness? And to whom did he swear that they should never enter his rest, but to those who were disobedient? So we see that they were unable to enter because of unbelief.

Sometimes, it's amazing how hard it is to see a simple truth. It can be laid out in front of us, and somehow we manage to avoid it. Maybe it's inconvenient, maybe it's something we'll get to later, or maybe it just doesn't apply to us. I'm a good person, so what I did really wasn't a sin. It's just a white lie... no one will know... it's OK just this once.

The reality is that we all sin. Hopefully, we're avoiding mortal sins, the ones that can also get us jailed by the civil authorities. But even small sins have a cost. They increase our separation from God, and as noted in today's lesson, it can harden our hearts.

Some people look at going to church as an obligation, or the fulfillment of a commitment or a duty. Maybe a better approach is to view church as a self help group, where we can spend a few minutes with friends that want us to succeed. They might even be able to help us see something that we've been avoiding. Wandering from the straight & narrow path periodically is inevitable. However, keeping good company can help a person see the road ahead, and maybe find a way to the narrow door.

Dear Lord. As we take this journey through life, help us to recognize the path that you have drawn for us. Weakness may lure us into sin and away from your grace, but we pray that our heartfelt belief in your love will serve as a compass and show us the way back to that path. Thank you for my friends in Christ at St. Vincent's. AMEN.

Bob Thornton
Database Architect

Psalm 49, 53, 119:49-72. Deuteronomy 9:13-21. Hebrews 3:12-19. John 2:23-3:15.



THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 21ST

A SIMPLER LIFE

John 3:16-21

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God. And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed. But whoever does what is true comes to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in God.”

A simpler life. Isn't that what we all strive for? I know I do. However, as a stay-at-home, albeit very “connected” Mom, a simple life seems far from my grasp. With young children, each day seems like a mountain; and most times I gravitate toward the Internet. There I seek advice, inspiration, tips & reassurance that the daily decisions I am making for my children are the “right” ones. The Internet provides me with blogs, articles, suggestions, recommendations, admonitions, etc. from other stay-at-home moms, working moms, & most importantly “experts”. You know, those people whose life work it is to research, analyze & study in order to advise the rest of us in the “right” way to do pretty much everything.

Then the issue becomes about me, not God. And all I have really done is over analyze myself into a state of self-doubt, which doesn't make me an effective parent. In fact, I realize that I have pretty much pulled the rug out from under myself.

{Insert deep cleansing breath here}

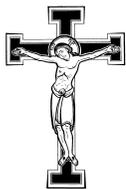
When I read this passage from John, I am startled back into reality. “whoever does not believe in him is condemned already. . . whoever does what is true comes to the light . . .”.

This foundational passage reminds us not to over analyze our lives or God's word. And really, it *is* just that simple: Take God's word at face value.

Lord, I pray that today I will read your Word and listen to your commands above all else. Help me to remember that it is really that simple . . . believe, pray & follow. AMEN

Kathleen Siek
Stay-at-Home Mom

Psalm 19, 46, 50, 59, 60. Deuteronomy 9:23-10:5. Hebrews 4: 1-10. John 3: 16-21



FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 22ND

Hebrews 4:11-16

Let us therefore strive to enter that rest, that no one fall by the same sort of disobedience... Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we have not a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

What is remarkable about Jesus, among all the other great things we know of Him, is that He is so in tune with man, and also equally divine. He has been through the same struggles and temptations that we find ourselves in daily. For this He has the unique quality of being the perfect example for all of us; we can see His path, strive to follow it, and work towards bringing the voice of God into our hearts and lives.

During this Lenten season, let us strive to bring our voice to God, if not through our actions, then through prayer. Reflect on how we can make a better effort to be near Him by following His Son.

Lord, please help us to have the confidence to follow your perfect priest, Jesus, to love Him and honor Him, and to be open to Your grace throughout our lives. AMEN.

Rob Shattuck
Financial Advisor

Psalm 40, 51, 54, 95. Deuteronomy 10:12-22. Hebrews 4:11-16. John 3:22-36



SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 23RD

Excerpts from Psalm 55:

¹ Give ear to my prayer, O God, and hide not yourself from my plea for mercy!

² Attend to me, and answer me; I am restless in my complaint and I moan,

³ because of the noise of the enemy, because of the oppression of the wicked. For they drop trouble upon me, and in anger they bear a grudge against me.

⁴ My heart is in anguish within me; the terrors of death have fallen upon me.

⁵ Fear and trembling come upon me, and horror overwhelms me...

...¹² For it is not an enemy who taunts me – then I could bear it; it is not an adversary who deals insolently with me – then I could hide from him.

¹³ But it is you, a man, my equal, my companion, my familiar friend.

¹⁴ We used to take sweet counsel together; within God's house we walked in the throng...

...¹⁶ But I call to God, and the Lord will save me....”

When reading Psalm 55 it initially appears to be in two parts. In the first part, David (or the writer if it's not David) asks God to protect him from his enemy. This subject is a frequent one in the Bible, particularly in the Old Testament where God is needed to avoid death from the enemy. Then, about half way through the prayer it is revealed that the enemy was, in fact, a friend who has become an enemy. Since rarely are our lives in danger from friend or foe, it's hard for most of us to relate to the writer of this prayer. But we are reminded that we are forever in need of God's help and His protection.

In my talks with God, probably like most people, I try not to make routine or trivial requests. I spend most of my time thanking Him for all he has given me. I never forget our church, its clergy staff, my family, our good health and the many other blessings we have received.

I guess it's easy to say I rarely ask for anything when God has given me so much. But I wonder what would I do in a situation like the one in this psalm; the enemy is obviously not a minor problem but one where the writer sees his life in jeopardy. When faced with a major problem, I believe we would turn to God without reluctance to ask for His help. It is a blessing to know that we have the confidence of saying “*But I call to God, and the Lord will save me.*” We know we can rely on Him to make the right decisions for us – not necessarily the ones we seek, but certainly the right one.

Our most kind and merciful Heavenly Father, we thank you for the many blessings you have given us. We thank you for our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, our Church and its clergy, the parishioners who put forth the extra effort that keeps our church going, and our good health. God, we thank you for protecting us from our enemies, and we ask you to protect those who are in harms way. AMEN

Jean Hart
Retired Teacher

Jake Hart
Helicopter Pilot

Psalm 55, 138, 139:1-23. Deuteronomy 11:18-28. Hebrews 5:1-10. John 4:1-26.



SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 24TH

PARABLE OF THE SOWER

Mark 4:14-20

The sower sows the word. And these are the ones along the path, where the word is sown: when they hear, Satan immediately comes and takes away the word that is sown in them. And these are the ones sown on rocky ground: the ones who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with joy. And they have no root in themselves, but endure for a while; then, when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately they fall away. And others are the ones sown among thorns. They are those who hear the word, but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches and the desires for other things enter in and choke the word, and it proves unfruitful. But those that were sown on the good soil are the ones who hear the word and accept it and bear fruit, thirtyfold and sixtyfold and a hundred-fold.

The parable of the sower is one of my favorites, and it has been depicted often in stained glass windows, drawings and paintings. The familiar story tells in obscure terms, the events that Jesus lays out plainly for his disciples when they ask him for its inner meaning. For me personally, there are two applications that I take away when I hear it repeated.

First, we are called to be that industrious farmer, distributing the word of God by telling others about our relationship with Jesus and the Father. This has to be done over time by making friends and becoming good enough friends that you can share this relationship without turning your friends off by your blatant religiosity. It is something we all need to do and to keep working toward it.

Second, we ourselves are the seed, and we must take care that we receive the Word and establish deep roots so that we can endure tribulation and persecution and so that we are not distracted by riches or cares of the world, but rather bear fruit and accept the Good News that Jesus has brought us.

Almighty God, whose Son taught us through the parables; Give us the courage to spread your Word and the strength to embrace it, that we may grow in love for You and bear fruit for Your kingdom. AMEN.

Robert Boyer
Retired Library Administrator

Psalm 8, 24, 29, 84. Jeremiah 1:1-10. I Corinthians 3:11-23. Mark 3:31-4:9.



MONDAY, FEBRUARY 25TH

THE HARVEST

John 4: 28-29, 35, 47

So the woman left her water jar and went away into town and said to the people, "Come, see a man who told me all things that I ever did. Could this be the Christ?" . . . "Look, I tell you, lift up your eyes and see that the fields are white for harvest." . . . "It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves and we know that this is indeed the Savior of the world."

In today's Gospel reading, a Samaritan woman has gone to Jacob's well to draw water that will quench her physical thirst, but there she meets Jesus who knows that she has a spiritual thirst and offers her "living water." She tells Jesus that she knows the Messiah is coming into the world, and he tells her that he is that Messiah. The woman did not expect to meet the Messiah at the well, but she did!

After her life-changing encounter with the Source of living water, the woman leaves her water jar to beckon the people of her town to come meet the Christ. Her experience at the well was followed by her desire to share her testimony and thereby point the way and lead others to Jesus so that they too could find him and hear him speak to them. Her testimony had the power to direct people to Christ, but it was Christ who offered them salvation.

The disciples were surprised to find Jesus talking to a Samaritan woman since Jews considered Samaritans to be unclean and disdained them. Yet this event showed the disciples that Jesus came to offer salvation to the entire world. He tells them to look and recognize the mission fields that are all around them.

During Lent as we spend time in prayer, meditation, and study of Holy Scripture in our preparation for Holy Week, we can reflect on the different times and many ways we have encountered Christ. (Have we ever unexpectedly encountered him?) We can give thanks for those people who helped to point us to Jesus Christ so that we could find him and begin a new life in him. We can give thanks for the words and actions of others that played a role in preparing our hearts to receive him as our Redeemer King. How, now, might our words and behaviors be pointing the way and leading others to Christ? Do we, like the woman at the well, long to share with others the Source of living water? With rejoicing, do we give glory to God for all that he has done and is doing in our lives? We each meet Christ in deeply personal ways, but together we meet him at the Eucharist. After sharing the Sacrament of His most precious Body and Blood, we are told to go out into the world rejoicing in the Lord. There we will see "the fields" where our witness through the power of the Holy Spirit can open the hearts of others and lead them to the Christ so that they, in turn, can hear Jesus speak to them and be brought into the harvest.

Heavenly Father, give us eyes to see the harvest fields that surround us and grant us the joyful desire to share what great things you have done and are doing in our lives through Jesus Christ so others might meet the Savior of the world and open their hearts to receive your life-giving Word. AMEN.

Metah Boroughs
Former Teacher

Psalm 56, 57, 58, 64, 65. Jeremiah 1: 11-19. Romans 1: 1-15. John 4: 27-42.



TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 26TH

REFUGE ON THE WINGS OF REDEMPTION

“Hear my cry, O God, listen to my prayer...” (Ps 61:1). Can you hear the note of desperation in David’s voice? Here was a man facing death on every turn, with enemies seemingly on every side. He was overwhelmed; he was hopeless; he was desperate. Can you relate to David today? I can. In fact, I do. There are times in our lives when everything seems to be closing in around us, whether that be circumstances beyond our control, or even a besetting sin or addiction that we can’t seem to escape from. With David we utter our desperate cry, “Hear my cry, O God, listen to my prayer!”

During Lent, the Church calls us to a fresh season of repentance to restore our sometimes fractured relationship with God. Yet, oftentimes I fear that many of us seek to amend our lives in our own strength. It’s a futile effort, really; we must fix our eyes on Christ, trusting that He will make us whole as we trust in Him and walk according to His Word. David understood this. He continues his prayer: “When my heart is faint, lead me to the Rock that is higher than I, for You have been my refuge, a strong tower against the enemy” (Ps 61:2-3). His message to us is simple: we can’t fix ourselves—we *must* be led to the Rock of Christ. He is *higher, more powerful, more compassionate, more loving, and desires our healing and deliverance more than we even do for ourselves.* He is the strength of our life, the Savior of our soul, and our strong tower of deliverance against the Enemy. Yet, for all this grandeur, He is closer than a heartbeat. Toward the end of his prayer David offers a beautiful and simple request: “let me take refuge under the shelter of your wings.” At the end of the day, God desires to be intimate with His children, to gather them—to gather *you*—under His wings, that you might know that nothing can come to you that does not first pass through His hands.

What happens to a person who turns away from themselves and seeks refuge under the redemptive wings of Christ? David tells us: “For God *alone* my soul waits in silence; from *Him* comes my *salvation.* He *only* is my *Rock* and my *salvation, my fortress; I shall not be greatly shaken*” (Ps 62:1-2). Beautiful isn’t it? In surrender, David discovered the obvious secret that it is in God, not ourselves, that we find our salvation and security. The only sure foundation—the Rock—is Christ Himself; with Him, *we will not be greatly shaken.* His outlook changed. When I stopped doing things my way and gave my life to Christ when I was 6 years old, everything changed for me as well. Now, I surrender everyday—walking forward in faith, with Christ, on that pilgrimage I set out on over 18 years ago. It hasn’t been easy, and there have been hard times, full of heartbreak and sorrow, but this I can say with full conviction: “*I have not been greatly shaken.*” With David I have learned to say, “Blessed be the Lord, who *daily* bears us up” (Ps 68:19). Not just at our baptism. Not just at our point of conversion. Not just at the altar rail. Not just when we feel spiritual—but *daily.* When our hearts are faint (and how often they are!), He leads us to the Rock that is higher than ourselves, our circumstances, and our sin. There, in the shelter of His wings, we are simply God’s child, receiving the comfort of our loving Father. Strengthened with that Power from on High, we go forth on our pilgrimage of faith once again, with courage and singleness of heart, to love and serve the Lord, making Jesus known in all that we do.

Heavenly Father, I surrender my life anew to you. Forgive me for trusting in my own strength. I ask that you would come into my life by the power of the Holy Spirit and dwell within me. You alone are my hope and my salvation. In Jesus’ Name, AMEN.

Bryant Matheu
Director of Discipleship

Psalm 61, 62, 68:1-36. Jeremiah 2:1-13. Romans 1:16-25. John 4:43-54.



WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 27TH

THE GIFT OF GOD'S LAW

Ps. 119: 33-36

*Teach me, O LORD, the way of your statutes;
and I will keep it to the end.*

*Give me understanding, that I may keep your law
and observe it with my whole heart.*

*Lead me in the path of your commandments,
for I delight in it.*

*Incline my heart to your testimonies,
and not to selfish gain!*

Psalm 119 is an beautifully-written acrostic poem, wherein each stanza of the original Hebrew text, all verses begin with the same letter. It offers praise for the gift of God's Torah, or covenant instruction for living a Godly life. Throughout Psalm 119, which also happens to be the longest book of the Bible, the author expresses reverence and admiration for God's gift of life's instructions, rejoicing that we are not left to our best guesses about God's commandments.

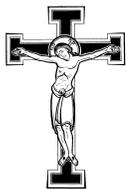
Today's prevailing attitude is stark in contrast. Society continues to reject the principle of accountability, while proponents of a single authority are ridiculed and scorned. An inordinate focus on personal liberty has muted any emphasis on the very idea of central authority and minimized the value of God's authority.

By praying and singing this Psalm, we rightly express our adulation for a mighty God that has bestowed his great gift upon us. By striving to live our lives according to his plan, we can enjoy the bounty he has reserved for us in this life.

O Father, we pray that you open our hearts to your will and enlighten our minds to your ways. Help us to be obedient to your Word so that the world may see your light shine in us. We thank you for blessings. AMEN.

Tom Brooks
Aeronautical Engineer

Psalm 72, 119: 33-40, 73-96. Jeremiah 3:6-18. Romans 1:28-2:11. John 5:1-18.



THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 28TH

I PRAY FOR RENEWED CONFIDENCE IN GOD'S PROMISES

Psalm 71: 12

Be not far from me, O God; Come quickly, O my God to help.

As a Christian, my responsibility to my family and friends is to let them know what God has done for me. God's promises are revealed to us through the bible and his answer to our prayers. His answer is real and significant to me. I continue to trust God's answers from prayer requests and have a fervent belief that his answer has a message to decipher and a lesson to be learned. It is intended to help me grow in the faith that God is beside me, giving me purpose and a sense of inner peace. In tough times and good times, I often feel grateful and in awe of the new perspective I have received on a multitude of blessings!

My prayer is that God will teach me to pray. I come seeking divine direction and a greater understanding of his wisdom.

Janice Hall,
Retired

Psalm 71, 74. Jeremiah 4:9-10, 19-28. Romans 2:12-24. John 5:19-29.



FRIDAY, MARCH 1ST

THE MOUTH IS SANCTIFIED TO THE LORD'S USE

Jeremiah 1:9 (NIV)

Then the Lord reached out his hand and touched my mouth and sanctified me, "I have put my words in your mouth."

What a wonderful passage of scripture! When God reached out and sanctified Jeremiah's mouth the Lord deemed that every word that would come forth from the young prophet's mouth would be for His glory and purpose. Have you ever thought about the power that the words from your tongue have on your life and the lives of others? Words are very powerful. Every time we use our tongue we wield the power to direct, build, destroy and/ or delight. All too often we use our tongue without thinking and wish we could take back what we just said. What kind of words spring from your mouth? Are they words that glorify God and his creations or are they words that hurt the very people that God asked us to love? Just one or two spoken words can have an immediate impact, good or bad, on the audience, the subject and even the speaker. Instead of using it to praise God and foster love between each other we all too often use it to further our own agenda and hurt others. The tongue is used to lie, gossip, manipulate, curse and criticize our brothers and sisters in Christ. We even use it to blame God or others for our misfortunes and mistakes.

But the words that proceed from our mouth are only a reflection of a more complex issue. Whenever we trace it to the source we find that the problem originates within our hearts long before it comes off of our tongue. Our tongue only mirrors what our heart is feeling. Until we are able to change what is in our hearts, we will never be able to "bridle the tongue" as James would direct us (James 1:26).

Is it hard to examine our hearts and make changes? Absolutely! Is it impossible? Not with God's help! Lent is a season of reflection, repentance and resolve. What better time to really begin to assess how you are using your gift of speech from the Lord. We also can ask the Holy Spirit to sanctify our thoughts and take control of our tongue. In Romans 6:13 we are exhorted to offer the parts of our body to God "as instruments of righteousness" our hands, eyes feet...and our tongue. Ask the Holy Spirit to sanctify our words for God's purposes just as it is stated in the passage from Jeremiah. God has given us this wonderful instrument with which we can glorify Him with our praises, pray to Him, sing to Him and witness to all of the world as to His Love for us.

Oh Holy Spirit, God the Father sent us the good news of His love and salvation through His beloved son Jesus Christ. All too often the words we speak to others are not kind, not loving and not good news. Too often we use our gift of speech to boast about our accomplishments, to deceive, speak harshly, criticize others and slander those who are different than ourselves. Holy Spirit purify our hearts. Help us to choose our words carefully so that they glorify the Father in all that we say. Help us to build up our brothers and sisters in Christ so that they may feel the love of the Father in all that they hear from our mouths. AMEN.

Stephen Thompson

Psalms 69:1-38, 73, 95. Jeremiah 5:1-9. Romans 2:25-3:18. John 5:30-47



SATURDAY, MARCH 2ND

THE GOODNESS OF THE LORD

Psalm 27:13,14

*I believe that I shall see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living!
Wait for the Lord; be strong and let your heart take courage; yea, wait for the Lord!*

As I read through the readings for today, March 2nd, the first verses that really stood out for me were from Jeremiah 5, verse 30, "An appalling and horrible thing has happened in the land." , and verse 31, "the prophets prophesy falsely and the priest rule at their direction; my people love to have it so, but what will you do when the end comes?". As members of St. Vincent's, we are blessed that our priests are not ruling at the direction of the prophets that are strongly and openly prophesying falsely. We are witnesses to the strength of our priests and our bishop, who are standing firm in the Word of the Lord. We are witnesses to the endless courage each of them has exhibited in the spiritual battle that is being fought against God's Word. We are witnesses to, and participants in, a spiritual battle that has been ongoing since the beginning of time. We are called upon to wait for the Lord, to be strong and to take courage in the face of the unknown outcome of legal battles presently being fought in our court system. We are holding fast to the righteousness of the Lord!

Where does this courage and strength come from? Where do our priests and our bishop find the endless dedication to continue the battle? Where do we, as members of St. Vincent's, find the dedication to God and our leaders to stand firm when we stand to lose the beautiful facilities we have worked hard to build and maintain? The strength, courage, dedication all come from the same source! Our confidence in God's protection is beautifully spelled out in the very familiar twenty-third Psalm, which is also included in today's readings. God's promise of "green pastures", "still waters" and "paths of righteousness" provide everything we need to proceed fully armed in our battle. Regardless of how deep the valleys of life appear to us, we "fear no evil" for we are led by God's comforting rod and staff. We have the promise that "goodness and mercy shall follow" us all the days of our lives. We know that when the end comes, a table has been prepared for us, we have been anointed by our Lord, and just as we drink from the chalice at the altar rail in this life, we know in eternity we will be drinking from an overflowing cup, because we have chosen to dwell in the "house of the Lord forever."

Dear Lord and Heavenly Father, Please be with us each day as we choose to follow the path of righteousness thou has set before us. When we falter or become weak in our endeavor, please restore our strength and courage. In the most holy name of Jesus, please grant us the ability to see the goodness of the Lord in our lives. AMEN

Linda Littlefield
Retail Management

Psalm 23, 27, 75, 76. Jeremiah 5:20-31. Romans 3:19-31. John 7:1-13.



SUNDAY, MARCH 3RD

TRY IT; YOU'LL LIKE IT!

“Taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the man who takes refuge in him. Fear the Lord, you his saints, for those who fear him lack nothing. The lions may grow weak and hungry, but those who seek the Lord lack no good thing.”

In this passage from Psalms 34, David extols the goodness of God after he called on Him for deliverance from King Achish of Gath, one of the Philistine's kings. David had just fled Saul who was going to kill him. David fled into Philistine territory and was accepted as a defector from Saul's army. However, the Philistines began to figure out that David was not just your ordinary defector of high military rank. He was the David who was notorious for slaying tens of thousands of Philistines, and most notably Goliath. Since his true identity was about to be revealed to King Achish, David called on the Lord to deliver him from King Achish, whom David feared very much. Needing a quick moment of inspiration from God in a very difficult situation, David acted insane and like a driveling idiot before King Achish. The King told his court to banish this crazy man from his sight. The King proclaimed that he had enough crazy people around him as it was. The custom of the time was not to harm anyone who was mentally unstable.

It worked! Praise God! David memorialized his close call with certain death and his thankfulness to the Lord in this Psalm praise for his deliverance, once again. As David suggests in his Psalm, tasting the Lord's goodness is a most pleasant experience if we would simply call on the Lord. David invites us to try a little dependence upon and trust in the Lord to see what a pleasant surprise we may have in store. Once we taste for ourselves, we will know immediately the sweetness of deliverance that He can and will provide. Our relationship with Him will grow and He will continue to nurture our relationship with Him. But we must first ask for a taste.

Try it; you'll like it!

Dear Lord, help us to remember that you are always there, ready to give us a taste of your goodness and mercy. Teach us your faithfulness.
AMEN

Don Bendure
Insurance Consultant

Psalm 34, 93, 96. Jeremiah 6: 9 – 15. 1Corinthians 6: 12 – 20. Mark 5:1 – 20.



MONDAY, MARCH 4TH

Psalm 77

3 "when I called God to mind, I groaned. As I lay thinking, darkness came over my spirit. 4 My eyelids were tightly closed, I was dazed and could not speak, 5 My thoughts went back to times long past, I remembered forgotten years; 6 All night long I was in deep distress, As I lay thinking my spirit was sunk in despair. 7. Will the Lord reject us for evermore? And never again show favor? 8 Has his un-failing love now failed us utterly? must his promise time and again be unfulfilled? 9 Has God forgotten to be gracious? Has he in anger withheld his mercies? 10 'Has his right hand,' I said, 'lost its grasp? Does it hang powerless, the arm of the Most High?

Living in troubled times it is easy to become preoccupied and distracted with our own worries and lose sight of our main focus. Daily we see and hear of more violence, broken relationships, broken dreams and souls. In this Psalm, the psalmist is obviously going through some rough times in his life and is crying out to God in his despair and agony and no doubt feels his prayers go unanswered. He questions God's love and protection and even God's graciousness but then remembers God's past deeds and miracles and meditates on His works and the favors he has poured on his people dispensing justice. The Psalmist's remembrance brings him out of his deep despair to find hope again and regain his footing on Faith.

We as humans have experienced similar times when we find ourselves broken due to illness, loss of loved ones, or other losses. We experience the emptiness of His love, His favor and feel that He has abandoned us to this world and to some extent question God's existence. We pray and pray and during these times of utter despair, of loneliness, of pain, we remain empty, unloved and feel our prayers go unheard or unanswered. We ask ourselves, has God heard me and why does He allow this? Why is God so angry with me? We know that the Lord performed many miracles, healed many from various illnesses and perhaps because of these it was easier to believe and have faith. Today we find ourselves striving to hang in there with our faith and our love for a God we have never seen nor heard. It is during these times, that we must remain firm in our faith and hope and never forget His love and His sacrifice of His son's death for our sins. God IS all around us. We just need to take the time to look, listen, and meditate on His word. God never abandons us. His love is unfailing and ever enduring. God's miracles continue today and are all around us but because of the busyness of our lives it is hard to listen or hear when He is calling us. We need to take the time to meditate on His word, court his love and continue to talk to Him daily listening for his message of love and Hope. We are His.

Heavenly Lord, you that have created this world and everything within it, listen to this poor and sinful soul's cry that comes from my heart's deepest pain. I come to you today with my humble cries and pleas to salvage me from these sorrows and worries. Give me the peace, the strength and comfort I need to overcome this. You are my strength, my refuge, my Protector and only you can give me the power to give bring relief. In your arm's power I will find my peace, my comfort, and the Love I have been seeking all my life. My home is with you Lord. Lord please come and walk with me on this journey until the storm has passed. Bring back the sunshine. Stretch out your hand so that I can touch you! AMEN.

Maria McDaniel
Registered Nurse Case Manager

Psalm 77, 79, 80. Jeremiah 7:1-15. Romans 4:1-12. John 7:14-36.



TUESDAY, MARCH 5TH

THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF FAITH

Romans 4:13-25 ESV

For the promise to Abraham and his offspring that he would be heir of the world did not come through the law but through the righteousness of faith. For if it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void. For the law brings wrath, but where there is no law there is no transgression. That is why it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his offspring—not only to the adherent of the law but also to the one who shares the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all.

“Go ahead and jump. I’ll catch you.” I think as parents we have all uttered these words to our children as they take that first trusting step off the side of a swimming pool and into our waiting arms. But do we trust our heavenly Father as much as we trusted our earthly parents to take care of us?

Think about the promise God gave to Abraham. The promise of being “the father of many nations” must have sounded impossible, but the unwavering trust in God by Abraham served to strengthen his faith and glorify God. Abraham took God at his word. His faith gloried God. Faith shows that God can and will do things that we as humans cannot do. In faith, we wait upon our Lord to answer our petitions.

Faith is vital in our Christian life. If we do not possess it, we are lost. We grow stronger and stronger in Christ as we practice that faith. Abraham was judged right with God. We know Abraham’s story. It is given to us as an example of continuous trust in God. Let us move forward in faith trusting always that God will do what he has promised to do for all who share the faith of Abraham. Go ahead and jump. He’ll catch you.

Let us pray:

Almighty God, we praise you for your perfect love on the Cross for our salvation. Grant your gift of inner peace and joy to all who call on your name with faith and love. Help our faith to be unwavering in all of life’s trials and tribulations. In Jesus name we pray. AMEN

Harriet Wade
Litigation Paralegal (retired)

Psalm 78:1-39, 78:40-72. Jeremiah 7: 21-34. Romans 4:13-25. John 7: 37-52



WEDNESDAY, MARCH 6TH

THE LIGHT OF CHRIST

John 8:12-20

“Lighten our darkness, we beseech thee, O Lord; and by thy great mercy defend us from all perils and dangers of this night...”
[BCP pg. 70].

John boldly asserts that Christ—the very Word of God—is the light and life of all people. “What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people.” We sing in an ancient hymn that “wherever love and charity dwell, God himself is there”. God is present wherever love is present, because God is love. Likewise, wherever light and life are present, Christ himself is there, because he is light and life. He is light, he is life. He is also Truth. Wherever light and truth are, Christ himself is there. Light, life, and truth: wherever these things are, Christ himself is there. He promised that his Spirit would lead us into all truth. Truth is light and life. In public life, seeing truth, speaking truth as best we can, is a prerequisite to the dawn of light and life. And we know this light, this peace, this truth, this Word of Life by name. We await his coming. We long for his light and life in these hearts of ours. We long for his light and life to illuminate the world around us.

Blessed are the broken pots, for they let in the light.

Richard Briggs

Psalms 81, 82, 119:97-120. Jeremiah 9:18-9:6. Romans 5:1-11. John 8:12-20



THURSDAY, MARCH 7TH

WE ARE ALL SINNERS

Jeremiah 10:23

I know, O Lord, that a man's life is not his own; it is not for man to direct his steps.

Most of us are pretty good about praying about “big” decisions---where to live, what job to take, maybe even who to marry.....but we fail to realize that faith is for all choices—not just the big ones.

Most of our lives are not spent trying to discern “big” decisions. It's the small decisions that we feel we can handle on our own. When was the last time you prayed over your grocery list before you went into the store? Did you really purchase ONLY what you needed? Or did you pick up “a few extras”. Every day we say, do and go places of our choosing...was God involved in those choices? Most of us would have to truthfully answer, “no”.

Humans like to feel we are “in control”. However, when someone does or says something we don't like or that challenges us or threatens us, how do we react? We pray for them---not ourselves. We want God to change someone else or change some other circumstance. We rarely see ourselves as “the problem”.

We are constantly picking up “a few extras”, whether it be food, clothing, home furnishings, books, etc....we are awash in “stuff” that we neither use or discard quickly. Our homes are full of “stuff” that we neither use nor enjoy. We have storage sheds and outside storage lockers full of “stuff” we might use “someday” that we just can't get rid of quite yet.

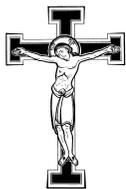
Our minds and emotions are just like our homes---full of “stuff” that has nothing to do with God or his will for us. Our thoughts and desires fall short of God's actual will for us.

I see Lent as a time to reconnect and get back in-sync with God and his will for my life. With his help, I need to purge the extraneous “stuff” that takes too much of my time and attention. The Jeremiah passage reminds me that my life is NOT my own, and I need God to direct ALL my steps, not just the “big” ones.

Thank you, God, for being Lord of my life. Please help me to purge any thought, word, or deed that is not in your will. I want YOU to be in control of all aspects of my life. In your son's name I pray. AMEN.

A.J. Wolery Blood
Counselor

Psalm 42,43,83,85, 86. Jeremiah 10:11-24. Romans 5:12-21. John 8:21-32.



FRIDAY, MARCH 8TH

TREE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

Psalm 92:15-15 EVS

The righteous flourish like the palm tree and grow like a cedar in Lebanon. They are planted in the house of the Lord; they flourish in the courts of our God. They still bear fruit in old age; they are ever full of sap and green, to declare that the Lord is upright.

The Bible says we are to be righteous and likens us to a tree. For a tree to be healthy, it must have a source of water so the roots can grow deep. When we are walking with God and spending time in the Bible, we are causing our roots to grow deeper. Jesus is the Living Water that we need. Daily time studying scripture and being in His presence is the source of our growth. We become righteous as we allow His Word to nourish and correct us.

There are times when life seems especially difficult and hard. This can be like a drought that can cause us to dry up if we are not in the Word. Jeremiah 17 speaks of this in verses 7-8. "Blessed is the man that trusts in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is. For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters and that spreads out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat comes, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither cease from yielding fruit." (KJV) As children of God, we can be strong, healthy and fruitful in all our seasons of life. In living a righteous life, we are showing the Righteousness of God.

Lord, help us always to be rooted in your Word so that we may withstand the winds and storms of life. In Jesus Name, AMEN.

Nina Barcus
Retired teacher

Psalm 88, 91, 92, 95. Jeremiah 11:1-8, 14-20. Romans 6:1-11. John 8:33-47



SATURDAY, MARCH 9TH

WHAT DO A LAMP AND A LOINCLOTH HAVE IN COMMON?

Jeremiah 13:1-11

1 "Thus says the Lord to me, "Go and buy a linen loincloth and put it around your waist, and do not dip it in water." 2 So I bought a loincloth according to the word of the Lord, and put it around my waist. 3 And the word of the Lord came to me a second time, 4 "Take the loincloth that you have bought, which is around your waist, and arise, go to the Euphrates and hide it there in a cleft of the rock." 5 So I went and hid it by the Euphrates, as the Lord commanded me. 6 And after many days the Lord said to me, "Arise, go to the Euphrates, and take from there the loincloth that I commanded you to hide there." 7 Then I went to the Euphrates, and dug, and I took the loincloth from the place where I had hidden it. And behold, the loincloth was spoiled; it was good for nothing. 8 Then the word of the Lord came to me: 9 "Thus says the Lord: Even so will I spoil the pride of Judah and the great pride of Jerusalem. 10 This evil people, who refuse to hear my words, who stubbornly follow their own heart and have gone after other gods to serve them and worship them, shall be like this loincloth, which is good for nothing. 11 For as the loincloth clings to the waist of a man, so I made the whole house of Israel and the whole house of Judah cling to me, declares the Lord, that they might be for me a people, a name, a praise, and a glory, but they would not listen."

Jesus' admonition to let one's light shine and not hide it under a bushel has become famous. It's catchy and makes for a nice Sunday school lesson. No harm there. But as I read this passage from Jeremiah, I realized that the comparison goes much deeper than "be honest about your faith." God, in speaking to Jeremiah, uses a strange example to demonstrate the very real dangers of letting faith take a back seat in life.

A lamp on a stand mostly eliminates the dangers of sharp or slippery objects on the floor: you can see them and avoid them. Put a basket over it, and no matter what the stand is like, simple tasks like getting up to go to the bathroom become fraught with danger. Worse, what happens if the basket catches fire?

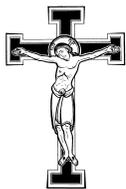
So consider the loincloth in light of the lamp. One when hidden becomes dangerous, and a potential fire hazard. The other becomes infected and useless. As the lamp represents what happens when one hides faith from others, so the loincloth is what happens when one hides faith from oneself. The loincloth was created to cling to the man, and man to God, thus man without God has no purpose.

The passage is positively bereft of hope, and the theme is in fact God's disappointment and sadness at the miserable condition of Israel. But think of it this way: we matter to God enough for him to become despondent when we turn away, not just because he wants to have a personal friendship with us, but because horrible things happen when we turn from Him. He cares for our needs, our emotions, and everything about us.

So God, don't let us turn away. You desire the best for us more than anything we might try to replace you with, and give us the meaning that we long for. Protect us from distractions, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us, reminding us that thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. AMEN

Joshua Higginbotham
Senior, SVS High

Psalm 87, 90, 130. Jeremiah 13:1-11. Romans 5:12-23. John 8:47-39.



SUNDAY, MARCH 10TH

DO YOU REMEMBER WHEN....?

Mark 8:18-21

“And do you not remember? When I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many baskets full of broken pieces did you take up?” They said to Jesus, “Twelve”. “And the seven for the four thousand, how many baskets full of broken pieces did you take up?” And they said to him, “Seven”. And he said to them, “Do you not yet understand?”

Many times when people gather for a party or a reunion they like to reminisce. In such a setting we hear these kinds of remarks: “Do you remember the senior play – how much fun it was?” “Do you remember the party after winning the district championship?” Or perhaps, “Do you remember the tough negotiations with that difficult customer? But we finally made the sale”.

Why, when we are facing difficulties or challenges in day to day life, we as Christians fail to recognize what God has done for us previously? A recurring theme in the Old Testament is “Remember how the Lord saved you from slavery in Egypt.”

In the Mass we are called to remember what Jesus did for us by his death on Calvary.

Too often life experience causes us to be pessimistic, to feel a kind of hopelessness. Remember – there are other experiences. Divorce came and friends helped us through it. We were sick and with the doctor’s help we recovered. We reached a breaking point and did not break.

Remember God has brought us this far and when we walk with Jesus nothing is too bleak or insurmountable. Our strength is in the Lord who loves us and saves us.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, I put my trust in you. Help me to remember your mercy, to perceive you in every situation or activity that I undertake. Help me live every moment with confidence in you. In your name I pray. AMEN.

The Very Rev. William A. Crary, Jr. SSC

Psalm 19, 46, 66, 67. Jeremiah 14:1-9, 17-22. Galatians 4:21-5:1. Mark 8:11-21.



MONDAY, MARCH 11TH

DOES THE LAW CAUSE US TO SIN?

Romans 7:1-12

Or do you not know, brothers—for I am speaking to those who know the law—that the law is binding on a person only as long as he lives? ²For a married woman is bound by law to her husband while he lives, but if her husband dies she is released from the law of marriage. ³Accordingly, she will be called an adulteress if she lives with another man while her husband is alive. But if her husband dies, she is free from that law, and if she marries another man she is not an adulteress.⁴Likewise, my brothers, you also have died to the law through the body of Christ, so that you may belong to another, to him who has been raised from the dead, in order that we may bear fruit for God. ⁵For while we were living in the flesh, our sinful passions, aroused by the law, were at work in our members to bear fruit for death. ⁶But now we are released from the law, having died to that which held us captive, so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit and not in the old way of the written code.¹² What then shall we say? That the law is sin? By no means! Yet if it had not been for the law, I would not have known sin. For I would not have known what it is to covet if the law had not said, “You shall not covet.”

What do Brothers, husbands, married women, sinful passions, fruit, death and a new way have in common? No, it is not an opening line for a comedy routine, but a riddle none the less.

Paul is talking to his brothers the Jews, those who know the law, (God’s Commandments). He tells them the law is not binding after death, and he uses legalistic terms that in his culture would be known and recognized. Paul realizes the inability of the law alone to save. He uses marriage as his example. Paul explains when a woman’s husband dies she is released from the law of marriage. There is a significant reason that he would chose marriage to illustrate the importance of this text. Christ carried our sins in His body to His death. Then we rise with Him spiritually and are free to "**marry**" Him who only can save us. It is not the law but Christ who saves us from ourselves!

Does the law then cause us to sin? NO, but it does make us aware of our sinful passions and our inability to follow these laws. These sinful passions (fruits of death) are our behavior when we try to live by the law. The law alone cannot save us. That is why no matter how good we are, it is not good enough for our salvation! We can’t save ourselves! It is only because of God’s grace that we are delivered from the bondage of sin and death. It is because of God’s grace, that we are released from the law so that we may serve the Lord and bear good fruit and behave in the New Way, (New Covenant)

Jesus promised us a helper and that helper is the Holy Spirit. He is the bond that unifies us with our God. The Spirit is the bond that helps us to mature and to become more worthy to be the bride of Christ. He helps us to understand that the law is no longer just an external code to follow, but an internal attitude, something to be embraced and nurtured.

Heavenly Father, help us to go forth in the name of Christ, to love and serve you, rejoicing in the power of the Spirit and to remember that it is because of your grace that we have been resurrected through Christ. AMEN.

Veronica Phillipott
Quality Technician for Dannon Yogurt

Psalm 89:1-18, 19-52. Jeremiah 16:10-21. Romans 7:1-12. John 6:1-15.



TUESDAY, MARCH 12TH

Romans 7:13-15

13 Did that which is good, then, bring death to me? By no means! It was sin, producing death in me through what is good, in order that sin might be shown to be sin, and through the commandment might become sinful beyond measure. 14 For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am of the flesh, sold under sin. 15 For I do not understand my own actions. For I do what I do not want, but I do the very thing I hate.

Lent is usually a time when I focus on my inability to stay ‘on the straight and narrow’ from a Christian perspective. As Paul indicates, though, in this reading, our struggle is with our fallen nature, with ourselves, to do what we as mortals want to do not what we are commanded to do by our Lord. Self discipline tends to be my weak spot; along with Paul I am ‘of the flesh’, and find myself habitually doing the things I know are not good for me. Finding that personal discipline is always challenging.

This season provides me with a reminder that helps lead me to increased focus in getting solidly back on the path I know I am intended to walk. To that end, I try to take better care of the body God has graciously provided and I make a concerted effort to focus more on Jesus through scripture. This renewed focus is outwardly exhibited by a change of diet, eliminating those things that I know to be the most damaging to my person (typically alcohol and sugar).

Stopping the consumption of specific food categories, though, is not the purpose of Lent. My understanding of Lenten observances is that it is designed to help us remember that Jesus fasted for 40 days, and to renew our focus on him not us. While I try to do a daily reading from the bible (not surprisingly given my technology focus, there are some good web resources available for that, including a few that will send me daily emails with a reading), the Lenten focus on renewed resistance to the evils of the world is my primary emphasis.

I hope and pray that all who are reading this will find the strength to make their own renewal successful and to continue to improve your (and my) ability to ‘keep to the narrow path’.

God bless you and keep you in this season of renewed Christian self discipline.

Tom Bauch
Technical Professional, IBM

Psalm 94, 95, 97, 99, 100. Jeremiah 17:19-27. Romans 7:13-25. John 6:16-27.



WEDNESDAY, MARCH 13TH

THE POTTER'S HOUSE

Jeremiah 18:1-6

The word came to Jeremiah from the Lord: "Arise, and go down to the potter's house, and there I will let you hear my words." So I went down to the potter's house, and there he was working at his wheel. And the vessel he was making of clay was spoiled in the potter's hand, and he reworked it into another vessel, as it seemed good to the potter to do.

Then the word of the Lord came to me; "Oh house of Israel, can I not do with you as this potter has done? Declares the Lord. Behold, like the clay in the potter's hand, so are you in my hand, O house of Israel."

This reading strikes home with me...as I have many times ruined good material at the mill or the lathe and saved it in the scrap pile. Then at some later date turned it into something else that was smaller or shorter or that the mistake could be cut out of.

The Lord's warning to Israel, to all mankind, and to each of us, is very clear. Mess this life up and we'll try again to get it right. At some point though, there is not enough material left to make anything. The scrap material will be sent to the recycler... "at the harvest the weeds will be thrown into the fire."

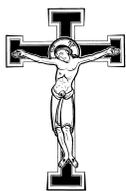
In Romans 8:1-11, Paul assures us that there is "no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death." God "the potter" has sent us the means of reconciliation for our sins through his grace in the person of Jesus Christ. A firm belief that the sinless Jesus was a perfect sacrifice and oblation on the cross for our sins and transgressions AND our serious determination to change our ways and follow Jesus' perfect example are the pathway to avoid the fires of hell and eternal separation from God. God, "the potter", refuses to give up on us as long as we accept Jesus Christ as our savior and we repent of our evil ways.

The crowds were searching for Jesus at Capernaum after the feeding of the five thousand and on finding him they asked, "What must we do, to be doing the works of God?" In John 6:29 Jesus answered them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom He has sent". The choice is ours...acceptance that God created the universe and us and that he sent Jesus to reconcile us to Him OR the scrapheap and eternal separation from Him.

Most merciful Father, help us to recognize that you are the creator and we are the creation and that we can be saved from ourselves by accepting your grace. Thank you for the gift of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. AMEN

Steve Schooling
Engineer

Psalm 101, 109:1-30, 119:121-144. Jeremiah 18:1-11. Romans 8:1-11. John 6:27-40.



THURSDAY, MARCH 14TH

Romans 8:26

And in the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groaning too deep for words.

My husband Jim Merrill would tell you that I *think* I know everything, or that I *think* I have an answer for everything. But most recently through our struggles with his slow recovery from a broken right femur, the mask has come off and this charade has ended.

Jim Merrill has heard one too many times me cry out loud in the past 10 weeks, “I just can’t do this!” Seriously – more like a streaming yell of utter frustration and exhaustion. I am exasperated that a broken bone could cripple **us both**. I have climbed mountains! I have an MBA! I have completed tasks that others said could not be done! So surely I can help my husband learn how to walk again.....Just who am I kidding? I am not a Physical Therapist; I am a Camp Director. I am not his doctor; I am his wife.

“And in the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness”

My weakness: The inability to fix everything around me. It’s at this very point of weakness that the Holy Spirit intercedes. Just at the time when I am crying out in my frustrations unable to fix what I want to fix the Spirit is stepping in. Why?....“for we do not know how to pray as we should”. But I pray! I do!

Dear Lord,(long pause for quiet thoughts, no thoughts) I’m too tired to pray.....How long have I been kneeling here? Don’t forget to go by the pharmacy. Oh, did I return the phone call to that parent today? What was it I was going to pick up at camp tomorrow? God, help me know how to help Jim tonight when he wakes. Help me be more patient when he asks for things in the middle of the night. Did we get the bill from the hospital yet? I forgot to flip the wash. God, I don’t even know what to saygroan. Crying begins..... God?

Unlike me, the Spirit’s way of praying is focused. It’s according to God, and according to God’s will.

When the pressures of life cause me to be inadequate with prayer, God still hears. God hears because the Spirit knows **what to pray** on our behalf. God hears because the Spirit knows **how to pray** on our behalf.

Spirit of the Living God, fall afresh on me. Melt me, Mold me, Fill me, Use Me.

Dear God , bring about decisions and circumstances in my life that will magnify Christ in the best way. AMEN.

Susan Merrill

Director of Programs, Camp El Tesoro

Psalms 69:1-38, 73. Jeremiah 22:13-23. Romans 8:12-27. John 6:41-51



FRIDAY, MARCH 15TH

THE SPIRIT GIVES LIFE

John 6:63-64

The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life. Yet there are some of you who do not believe."

In previous verses, Jesus had said that anyone who did not eat His flesh and drink His blood would have no life in them. Many of His disciples were grumbling that this was a "hard teaching" that many of them could not accept, and they went away. Jesus then went on to say that it is the Spirit which gives us life.

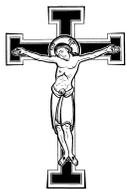
Our problem is that we live in this world in the flesh. We have needs, wants and desires. There are, in fact, many "hard teachings" in the Bible that conflict with our human leanings. How hard is it sometimes to turn the other cheek or keep our mouth shut in this society that is replete with trash talk, taunting, and put-downs? St. Paul spoke extensively about his own battle between flesh and spirit.

In speaking to prison inmates, I have often made note that Christianity is considered to be "weak man stuff" in the unit. I tell them that, to the contrary, it takes a strong man to be a Christian there. Not strong as in physical stature or strength, but strong in heart, mind, and spirit. In this same way we also need to be strong to overcome the flesh and the world. In our own power we can do nothing. We need to daily invite the leadership of Jesus and the direction of the Holy Spirit into our lives.

Dear Lord, Simon Peter said to you, "You have the words of eternal life. We believe and know that you are the Holy One of God." (John 6:68-69) Help us to be strong in that same belief. Help us to live in the power of the Spirit each day so that we might become closer to you and closer to the person you want us to be. AMEN.

Larry Jones
Air Traffic Control Instructor

Psalms 95, 102, 107:1-32. Jeremiah 23:1-8. Romans 8:28-39. John 6: 52-71



SATURDAY, MARCH 16TH

THE EUCHARIST

John 6:66-69

⁶⁶ After this many of his disciples turned back and no longer walked with him. ⁶⁷ So Jesus said to the Twelve, "Do you want to go away as well?" ⁶⁸ Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life, ⁶⁹ and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God."

Jesus was teaching in the synagogue at Capernaum. He told his many disciples that unless they ate the flesh of the Son of Man and drank his blood they would have no life in them, but that whoever would feed on his flesh and drink his blood would have eternal life and that he would raise them up on the last day. However, this was a hard thing to take and many deserted him.

For the ones who stayed, the last supper clarified this hard saying. Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me." Then, "in the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you." Luke 22:19-20.

As we go through Lent we remember his broken body is the propitiation for our sins and that his blood takes away the sins of the world.

Let us take the Eucharistic sacrament with thanksgiving and faith, in Lent and every season. Let it always be to us a visible sign of an invisible grace. For truly, to whom else shall we go for the words of eternal life?

Bret Coody
Vestry

Psalms 33, 107:33-43, 108:1-13. Jeremiah 23:9-15. Romans 9:1-18. John 6:60-71.



SUNDAY, MARCH 17TH

HIS MERCY ENDURETH FOREVER

Psalm 118:29 (King James version)

*O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good: *
for his mercy endureth for ever..*

Sometimes it is possible to forget that the Bible is full of poetry, because we are so used to thinking that poetry consists of words that rhyme. Yet much of the scripture that we use in daily and weekly worship is drawn from the poetry of the Hebrews, as well as other poetry from the New Testament era such as the Song of Mary. First place among this poetry is taken by the Psalter, or the Psalms of David. There are many reasons that we read this poetry as part of our worship, but one of the most important is that every type of human experience is expressed by the psalmist in relation to God's goodness, power, mercy—and most of all, his steadfast love for us, individually and collectively.

In the first part of this psalm the exhortation is made for nation, tribe, and "them now that fear the LORD" to acknowledge the permanence of God's goodness and mercy—that is, Israel, which can stand for the church; the house of Aaron, which can stand for the clergy; and those who fear the Lord, that is, all believers as individuals. The rest of the psalm talks about relying on God to help us in all sorts of adversity, returning again to the constancy of God's power and love, and rejoicing in his triumph.

Sometimes doubts and troubles make us wonder about our place in this life and the next. Psalm 118 speaks to our doubts: "I called to the LORD in my distress; the LORD answered by setting me free." This psalm repeatedly speaks in terms of joy, triumph, victory, and salvation. Over and over we are reminded of God's goodness and mercy, with the last verse of the psalm echoing the first: "Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his mercy endures for ever."

Heavenly Father, we thank you for the steadfast protection you grant those who rely on you. Be at our side as you guide us into your gates of righteousness, and open our eyes to marvel at the works of your right hand. Teach us to rejoice in your day, and bring us into your eternal kingdom. AMEN.

Charles M. Gatlin, Jr.
Cantor and (aging) graduate student

Psalm 118, 145. Jeremiah 23:16-32. 1 Corinthians 9:19-27. Mark 8:31-9:1



MONDAY, MARCH 18TH

Psalm 145 sings the praises of the goodness of God. While reading the verses, I can almost hear a tune. Countless songs use these exact words, “they...shall sing aloud of Your righteousness”. (v 6)

Even as the wondrous works and might of God’s awesome deeds are listed – there is an obligation that is given to us. We are the works of “All your works shall give thanks to you, O Lord, and Your faithful shall bless You” (v 10). We- are the “they shall speak of the glory of Your kingdom, and tell of Your power, to make known to all people Your mighty deeds, and the glorious splendor of Your kingdom.”

Not only do we acknowledge God’s wonders and gifts – we are to make known to all people, through all generations. We can’t keep this information to ourselves. We are to share it the good news to family, friends and those people who God puts in our path.

We are never too old or ill for this challenge – and it is not really a simple request, but an assignment. “The Lord upholds all who are falling, and raises up all who are bowed down.” (v 14) “My mouth will speak the praise of the Lord, and all flesh will bless his holy name forever and ever” (v 21)

We have our instructions and our work cut out for us, but lucky for us, this Psalm gives us the words to use and sing.

Dear Lord and Heavenly Father, You give us the words to use, please give us the courage to share Your greatness with others. AMEN.

Susan Frey

Psalm 31, 35. 145. Jeremiah 24:1-10. Romans 9:19-33. John 9:1-17.



TUESDAY, MARCH 19TH

ST. JOSEPH'S DAY

Matthew 1: 24

“When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him”

Today we celebrate the Feast of St. Joseph, the Blessed Virgin Mary's betrothed, the earthly father of our Lord, Jesus Christ. Here in the middle of Lent we celebrate a major feast day. It is one of those classical Christian moments of dichotomy. Celebration in the midst of Lent. Life in the midst of death. Salvation in the midst of sin. Our Christian faith is full of these moments.

And what shall we do? How shall we celebrate? How do we observe this feast of Blessed Joseph? We look to the gospel appointed for this day. It is the story of the birth of our Lord. Matthew 2: 18-22. “Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way.” It is a reading from the season of Advent. The preparation of the incarnation. In the midst of our preparation for the resurrection we read of the incarnation. In expectation we prepare for the Feast of the Resurrection.

And how do we prepare? We, like Joseph, must do as the Lord commands. When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him” We too will awake and we too will hear the angel of the Lord speaking to us and we too must listen to what the Lord and saying and we must do as the Lord commands.

Let us pray: O God, who from the family of thy servant David didst raise up Joseph to be the guardian of thy incarnate Son and the spouse of his virgin mother: Give us grace to imitate his uprightness of life and his obedience to thy commands; through the same thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. AMEN.

Deacon Kerwin Wade

Psalm 34, 132. Isaiah 63:7-16. 2nd Chronicles 6:12-17. Matthew 1:18-25



WEDNESDAY, MARCH 20TH

TAKING THINGS TO HEART

Romans 10:14-21

Roman's is one of my favorite books in the bible. Paul is a missionary and his teachings are meant to be lived out. Paul tells us exactly what needs to happen 1) messengers must be sent, 2) the message of Christ must be preached, 3) the message must be heard, 4) the message must be believed by those who hear. Those seem like very straight forward and easy instructions! So why do we still doubt? What makes us question God's presence or ability to do the things he has promised? Paul goes back to the Old Testament to remind us that God has a long track record of keeping his promises.

Paul continues in verses 16-18, to emphasize an important point: It is not just enough to go and spread the message of the good news. The one who hears the message must also respond and believe. Unfortunately, not all the Israelites who heard the good news accepted it. Faith comes from hearing. The Greek word for faith means more than "listening"; it means "taking it to heart". The Israelites heard with their ears but they did not "hear" with their hearts. When we hear sermons preached about the good news of Jesus Christ and the grace God extends to us, do we respond with faith? Or, are we like the Israelites who heard without faith and rejected God?

We are blessed to live in a part of the world where we can hear the good news as often as we like. Our challenge is not only in hearing or knowing, but in believing. I cannot help but think how sad and disappointed God must have been in Romans 10:21 when he said "All day long I opened my arms to them, but they were disobedient and rebellious." Let us not be like the Israelites who failed to "hear", but be able to open our hearts to listen and reflect that belief and love in all that we do.

Dear Lord: Please let us, not only be able to listen to your word, but to believe and trust in all that we know it can do. Please help give us strength when we have doubts and help us always remember that your arms are open. AMEN.

Stephanie Green
SVWF President

Psalm 119:145-176,128,129,130. Jeremiah 25:30-38. Romans 10:14-21. John 10:1-18.



THURSDAY, MARCH 21ST

DUDE, WHO STOLE MY SOCIETY?

A friend once told me he thought he woke up one morning in a parallel world that looked exactly like ours except everything was wrong. I feel that way too sometimes, but I need to trust in the Lord. Society seems to have become “everything is OK” and things that used to be “wrong” are now justified. If Jesus thought the generation he walked among was sinful and adulterous, what would He think if He came back today? Woody Allen says He would probably throw up (from Hannah and her Sisters). He probably meant it to be funny, but I’m not laughing. Consider why we are in a lawsuit with TEC, consider the celebration of Roe vs. Wade at 40, consider everything else you might expect from a defiantly godless society.

Jeremiah (26:1-16) fears for his life at the prospect of delivering God’s message of repentance. God’s response? Trust me and don’t water down the message. In John 10:19-42, Jesus is astounded that the crowd does not understand who He is after everything He has shown them. In other words, after all the good works He has done in His Father’s name, they still don’t trust Him or believe. Finally, Paul (Romans 11:1-12) referring to the remnant of Israel that has not been unfaithful says “And if by grace, then it is no longer of works; otherwise grace is no longer grace. But if it is of works, it is no longer grace; otherwise work is no longer work.”

When things are difficult and everything outside the window seems wrong, trust the Lord. If there is no trust, what kind of faith is there? If there is no faith, then there is no hope. C. S. Lewis said that if there was no God, then nothing matters. But if there is a God, everything matters.

Everything matters. Trust the Lord.

Dear Lord, please soften my heart and grant me the wisdom to do what you would have me do. Grant me grace and mercy even though I am undeserving. Let it be your way, not mine. AMEN.

Andrew Schast
Pater Familius / Chorister

Psalm 131, 132, 133, 140, 142. Jeremiah 26, 1-16. Romans 11:1-12 John 10:19-42



FRIDAY, MARCH 22ND

SHOW ME THE WAY

Show me the way I should go, for to you I lift up my soul. Rescue me from my enemies, O Lord, for I hide myself in you. Psalms 143:8-9

Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek and find me when you seek me with all your heart. Jeremiah 29:12-13

*Show me the way . . .
Give me the strength and the courage
To believe that I'll get there someday
And please show me the way*

From “*Show Me the Way*” by Styx (1991). Written by Dennis DeYoung.

Twenty-two years ago, in early 1991, the U.S. was just entering the Gulf War. A song written by Dennis DeYoung, a devout Catholic and member of the band Styx, became an unofficial anthem of the Gulf War, and it seemed one could not turn on the radio without hearing its plea to “Show me the way.” Optimism was high and confidence was strong.

Ten years later, the U.S. is plunged into grief and disbelief at the tragedy of September 11. How could God let this happen to us? Confidence lagged and optimism was nowhere to be found. Instead of pleas for guidance, the music of 9/11 gave us pleas for revenge and remembrance. It seemed we were quite lost.

And if I see a light, should I believe? Tell me how will I know?

Crises of faith arise when the things we believe in most let us down—people, institutions, the ideals we hold dear, and even the God we worship. Darkness enters our lives and we stop and look around—bewildered. How did we get here? How do we find our way back? In these times of sorrow (ongoing war, poor economy, suffering, and so on), we are called to remember that it is God alone who can deliver us, but it is our job to call upon him and ask him to show us the way.

Heavenly Father, we ask your guidance for this day. We ask that you show us the path you would have us to take and give us the strength to follow your will. Remind us that you have a plan for our lives and that if we ask, you will show us the way. AMEN.

Rebecca Cervantes
Paralegal

Psalms 22, 95, 141, 143:1-12. Jeremiah 29:1, 4-13. Romans 11:13-24. John 11:1-27, 12:1-10.



SATURDAY, MARCH 23RD

ALWAYS THERE

Psalm 142

¹I cry aloud to the LORD; I lift up my voice to the LORD for mercy.²I pour out before him my complaint; before him I tell my trouble.³ When my spirit grows faint within me, it is you who watch over my way. In the path where I walk; people have hidden a snare for me.⁴ Look and see, there is no one at my right hand; no one is concerned for me. I have no refuge; no one cares for my life.⁵ I cry to you, LORD; I say, "You are my refuge, my portion in the land of the living."⁶ Listen to my cry, for I am in desperate need; rescue me from those who pursue me, for they are too strong for me.⁷ Set me free from my prison, that I may praise your name. Then the righteous will gather about me because of your goodness to me.

Regardless of age, economical means, gender or church affiliation, no one is immune to the trouble that can rear its ugly head at the most inconvenient time. It occurred as early as the Garden of Eden and continues to be an adverse power that plagues us today. Panic and fear surface and the reaction is usually the same, A CRY FOR HELP! We look to others or (heaven forbid) things, for our consolation, but, the silence compounds our feeling of loneliness. Finally, at our lowest point, we supplicate to our LORD.

The good news is that the breaking point becomes our first step toward the realization that God's love has always been there! When negative influences engulf us, our greatest Comforter becomes apparent. The enemy becomes the catalyst that helps open our eyes to a LIVING God. With barriers relaxed and fading, we allow ourselves to be surrounded by a faith based community with common goals of devotion and need. Together we celebrate the defeat of corruption and misery and replace it with love, care and the hope of eternal life. **We were never alone.**

Dear Father in Heaven, help us to focus on your constant love and care as we look forward to the daily walk with you. Please give us the strength to convert negative energy that comes our way into the ministry of reaching out to others who experience loneliness. We ask that they feel your love and trust the gift of grace. AMEN.

Sherry Heiser
Guidance Counselor

Psalm 42, 43, 137:1-9, 142, 144. Jeremiah 31:27-34. Romans 11:25-36. John 10:28-44.



PALM SUNDAY, MARCH 24TH

PALM SUNDAY

1 Timothy 6:12-16

St. Paul told his young colleague Timothy to “fight the good fight of the faith; take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses” (1 Timothy 6:12). The blessed Apostle was writing his friend from prison, just one of many hardships he had endured. For by the time Paul wrote to Timothy the older man had repeatedly endured “beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, [and] hunger” for the sake of the Good News of Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 6:5).

So often we in the U.S. take our faith for granted. For us there is no real threat of government persecution. Indeed, here in the “Bible Belt” even the social ostracism Christians sometimes find elsewhere seldom occurs. And yet we, too, have to “fight the good fight of faith.” For as Paul reminds the Ephesian Christians, “we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places” (Ephesians 6:12).

As Lent draws to a close with Holy Week we would be well-served to remember that ancient serpent, the devil, who will do anything he can to make us forget to whom we belong and to whom we owe our allegiance and obedience. “Be sober-minded; be watchful,” St. Peter warns, for “your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour” (1 Peter 5:8). But we need not fear the Adversary, as our Savior God has given us everything we need to prevail in this fight. “Stand firm, therefore,” Paul exhorts the Christian, “having girded your loins with *truth*, and having put on the breastplate of *righteousness*, and having shod your feet with the equipment of the *gospel* of peace; besides all these, taking the shield of *faith*, with which you can quench all the flaming darts of the evil one. And take the helmet of *salvation*, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the *word of God*” (Ephesians 6:14-18). A righteous life—arising from repentance, buttressed by a living faith, committed to spreading the gospel, and thoroughly soaked in the truths of Holy Scripture—cannot but triumph over the wiles of Satan through the grace of God, which is ours in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The Rev. Randall W. Foster

Psalms 24, 29, 103. Zechariah 9:9-12. 1 Timothy 6:12-16. Matthew 21:12-17



MONDAY IN HOLY WEEK, MARCH 25TH

THE GREATEST ACT OF LOVE

Psalm 51:8

Purge me from my sin, and I shall be pure; wash me, and I shall be clean indeed.

Accepting that we are sinners is difficult to do. Yet, from the moment of our birth, we are sinners. It is not that we get up each morning and decide which sins we will commit during the day. As we go through the day, some of what we think, some of what we say, and some of what we do will be sinful in nature. Our only hope is to ask forgiveness.

A priest once said that anytime we run into trouble, you can expect two knees to hit the ground. Our knees should hit the ground, not just when we have a problem, but especially when the weight of our sins is just too great. We need to ask God to forgive us. We need to ask God to heal us; to wash us clean; and take away the burden of our sins.

God loves us so much that he did all that for us. He offered us the greatest act of love mankind has ever seen. He sent his Son to die for us. He gave us his Son so that his broken body would heal ours and his blood would wash us clean.

Most merciful Father, grant us the understanding of our sinful nature. We ask for your forgiveness for those sins which we can admit to you and for those sins which we are too ashamed to confess. We ask this in the name of the Son you sent to save us, Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. AMEN.

Ken Monk

Head of St. Vincent's School

Psalm 51:1-20, 69:1-23. Jeremiah 12:1-16. Philippians 3:1-14. John 12:9-19.



TUESDAY IN HOLY WEEK, MARCH 26TH

OUR COMMONWEALTH

Philippians 3: 20-21

But our commonwealth is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will change our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power which enables him even to subject all things to himself.

For some of us, the failings of the body are frequently in mind. We age, we are injured, we fall ill. We are often subject to a symphonic crescendo of pain over the course of our lives. It is natural to wonder why. The prophet Jeremiah asks the question for us: “Why is my pain unceasing, my wound incurable, refusing to be healed?” (Jeremiah 15:18) In his letter to the Philippians, Paul seems to answer this question by reminding us that, in heaven, we will find complete rebirth and renewal—body and soul unto everlasting life.

For those of us blessed with little physical pain and discomfort in the here and now, Lent is an exercise of directing our minds away from our transient bodies, toward the life hereafter. When denied, our bodies complain. We become very aware of them and their manifold desires. We are uncomfortable. We are in pain. During Lent, as we fast and carry out our individual discipline of devotion, we are reminded of our coming victory over the final failing of our bodies in death. In a small way, might Lent be preparing us to die? To move into the arms of Christ in heaven and have our lowly bodies changed to be like his glorious body?

The LORD has become my stronghold, and my God the rock of my refuge. LORD hear my supplication; LORD hear my prayer. Strengthen me and guide me during Lent. AMEN. (Psalm 94 & 6)

Warren T. Jackson
Psychologist

Psalm 6, 12, 94. Jeremiah 15:10-21. Philippians 3:15-21. John 12:20-26.



WEDNESDAY IN HOLY WEEK, MARCH 27TH

QUIET YOUR SOUL

Philippians 4:1-13

The world we live in is full of distractions, busy-ness, pain, suffering, injustice and evil. It is very easy to lose your way and to lose your focus on God. The world forces you to turn away and it is hard to resist that force. But as James 1:27 states: 'Religion that is pure and undefiled before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world.'

But how do you keep yourself unstained from the world? Today's reading from Philippians gives a foundation for being able to resist the force of the world: 'whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, do; and the God of peace will be with you.' (vv. 8-9) So by keeping your heart and mind on the goodness of God, you are able to keep the peace of God within you as encounter the world.

Building on this foundation, a saying by Mother Teresa provides a practical blueprint to actually achieve this peace. She says this:

*The fruit of silence is prayer;
The fruit of prayer is faith;
The fruit of faith is love;
The fruit of love is service;
The fruit of service is peace.*

So by quieting your soul and silently listening to God, you can keep your focus on God as you live out your calling here in this world.

Rick Ward

Psalm 55, 74. Jeremiah 17:5-10, 14-17. Philippians 4:1-13. John 12:27-36



MAUNDY THURSDAY, MARCH 28TH

MY REFUGE AND MY PORTION

Psalm 142 : 4-5

4 *I look to my right hand and find no one who knows me; **

I have no place to flee to, and no one cares for me.

5 *I cry out to you, O LORD; **

I say, "You are my refuge, my portion in the land of the living."

As I considered what to write for this first day of the Sacred Trimmun, I read the Psalm appointed for Evening Prayer and found these verses that I would like to take a couple of moments on which to reflect.

I suspect that at this time of our Lord's life, the night in which He was betrayed, in which he was handed over to death, even death on the cross, He may have felt that He had "no place to flee and no one cares." Even from the cross on Good Friday he will utter those heart wrenching words from Psalm 22, "My God, my God, why hast those forsaken me." So even as we begin these most Holy Days we are reminded of yet another time—the time of our Lord's incarnation—in which He assumed our flesh and took on our humanity.

For we have all felt this way, I'm sure. Either abandoned or forsaken or alone or without hope or comfort. But we continue and we cry out, "You are my refuge, my portion in the land of the living." And in that is our hope and our salvation.

So as we begin these most sacred and wrathful days, leading up to that most glorious feast, let us reflect on our Lord's trials, His cry's for help and His incarnation, so that we too may join with Him in the Church's most joyful celebration.

Almighty Father, whose dear Son, on the night before he suffered, did institute the Sacrament of his Body and Blood: Mercifully grant that we may thankfully receive the same in remembrance of him who in these holy mysteries giveth us a pledge of life eternal, the same thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord; who now liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Spirit ever, one God, world without end. AMEN.

Deacon Kerwin Wade

Psalm 102, 142, 143. Jeremiah 20:7-11. 1 Corinthians 10:14-17, 11:27-32. John 17:1-11



GOOD FRIDAY, MARCH 29TH

FACING THE CHALLENGE

Genesis 22:2, 9-12

Then God said, "Take your son, your only son, Isaac, whom you love, and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains I will tell you about. — When they reached the place God had told him about, Abraham built an altar there and arranged the wood on it. He bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. Then he reached out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. But the angel of the Lord called out to him from heaven, "Abraham! Abraham!" "Here I am," he replied. "Do not lay a hand on the boy," he said. "Do not do anything to him. Now I know that you fear God, because you have not withheld from me your son, our only son."

In this world, we all face a little thing called life. Life is never the same for any of us. Sometimes it is wonderful, ecstatic, and brilliant, yet other times it is dark, tearful, and challenging. We each face life in our own ways. We have all been challenged in our life, some more than others. But have we *really* been challenged?

Every time I read or listen to this passage from Genesis, I wonder in my heart how would I handle God's challenge? Would I be able to give up my only son, a son that I love and cherish? Would I be able to obey our Lord? I really don't know if I can answer that, which troubles me as I then question the strength and character of my faith. In fact, as I delve deeper into thought I realize that we do not suffer the persecution that early Christians did. Am I the type of Christian that can be steadfast in my faith in the face of such trials and tribulations?

My thoughts then turn to life in the present day. While I may not be suffering religious persecution or the trappings of the impoverishment of third world life, there are many others who are facing those challenges. This then is the call to action by God. This is our test of faith to make Jesus know in all we do every day. To support and enrich our mission programs, reach out to our communities, and to raise our children in the light of our savior, Jesus Christ. This is my call to the mountain and I am able to answer this call because of the conviction of faith and the love of the St. Vincent parish community.

So my answer to how will I handle God's challenge is simply this...I will with God's help!

For Church workers: Almighty and everlasting God, by whose Spirit the whole body of the Church is governed and sanctified; Receive our supplications and prayers, which we offer before thee for all estates of men in thy Holy Church, that every member of the same, in his vocation and ministry, may truly and godly serve thee. Through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen. (St. Augustine's Prayer Book)

Scot Richardson

Psalm 22, 40:1-19, 54, 95. Genesis 22:1-14. 1 Peter 1:10-20. John 13:36-38.



HOLY SATURDAY, MARCH 30TH

LET US TEST AND EXAMINE OUR WAYS

You, most probably like me, still remember the days when you were learning either to ride a bicycle or drive a car! Yes, for some of us, it may seem like long time ago, but I am quite certain that those memories have not totally faded away. Some of us still carry the scars of that terrible fall that initiated you into riding the bike. And yes, we remember how terribly nervous and confused you were; listening to those first instructions and it felt like you would never get it. I remember feeling rather weird as the instructor insisted: “push the gas pedal, but if necessary, be ever ready to switch to the break pedal; hold on to the steering wheel but where necessary, turn it to get out of somebody’s way; look in the rear-view mirror while monitoring the side-mirrors; and, keep the car in the middle of the lane.”

Whereas it may seem so normal to drive these days, indeed there was a time when it seemed so incomprehensible!!

Unlike other classes, where we enroll as novices but eventually grasp the basics and do it like second-nature to us, the same is not true of spiritual things. In fact, if there is anything that spiritually focused individuals should guard against; it is familiarity. So it is therefore not surprising that every year we go back to the drawing board to seek the face of the Lord and ask Him to direct our lives like it is the first time we are doing so.

Lent, offers anew; the opportunity ‘to test and examine our ways’, anticipating a ‘return to the LORD’! Lent avails us an opportunity to ‘lift up our hearts and hands to God in heaven’ (*Lamentations 3:40-41*) - in utter desperation just the way we did when we were learning driving - fully trusting that the instructor would not let us crash. Yes, we lift our hearts and hands, in full confidence that God won’t let us drown in the sea of sin.

During each day of our Lenten observance, God bids us thus; “Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts.” but we must be sincere in doing so because He discerns the thoughts and intentions of the heart (*Hebrews 4.7-8*). In Lent, we acknowledge that indeed no creature is hidden from his sight, and all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account. (*Hebrews 4:11-13*)

Began on Ash Wednesday with the words ‘remember thou art dust and unto dust thou shalt return’, throughout Lent we are bid to remember that we are not simply vessels of the flesh because those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace (*Romans 8. 4-6*). Lenten observance ushers us into the realm of holiness by willingly offering ourselves to spiritual pruning - to rid us of all things filthy that eventually tarnish our relationship with God. We feel the obligation to do so because he is our God, and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. So, he adds, ‘today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts’ (*Psalms 95*).

Although we do this every year, the danger is engaging in Lenten observance by rote— after all we just did it 365 days ago!! It is therefore my prayer that we do not get so familiarized with doing things holy that we miss the golden opportunity of hearing that voice of God requiring us to amend our ways and drawing closer and closer to him, especially in those areas where he is showing us the need to change - for his greater glory. It is my sincere prayer that this Lenten period will be ‘time well spent’ - with the Lord. Amen.

Heavenly Father, One thing I ask of you, O LORD, is to enable me seek after your ways and not my ways during this Lenten season; teach me to appreciate dwelling in your presence not only during this Lent but ‘all the days of my life, gazing upon the beauty of you my LORD and my God.

Teach me your ways, O LORD, and lead me on a level un-blemished path of righteousness by only waiting on you, LORD (Psalm 27) and nothing else. I ask all this in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Fr. John S. Kalimi

Psalm 27, 88, 95. Lamentations 3:37-58. Hebrews 4:1-16. Romans 8:1-11.



EASTER SUNDAY, MARCH 31ST

EASTER DAY

Matthew 28:1-10

How does Easter come to us?

When we think of Easter, we think of flowers, gardens, sunshine, birds, butterflies, bunnies, joy and light. These are just a few things we associate with Easter.

But how did Easter come to the first witnesses of the Resurrection?

Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to the tomb of their deceased teacher in near dark. They were mourning and grieving. There was no hope, no expectation of a miracle; only sorrow, pain, and grief.

Standing in the darkness of a cold tomb, Mary was called by name. Death could not overcome the Son of God. And in his victory of life, grief, despair, and sorrow were destroyed as well. Suddenly, Jesus stood behind Mary and called her by her name.

Many of us might find ourselves in difficult times. We are challenged by personal losses, personal frustrations and tempted by sorrow and despair. The Resurrection of Jesus Christ, Easter itself, comes to us in whatever state we find ourselves. And Jesus calls us by name. Like Mary, he bids us come up out of the cold dark tomb and into the dawn of a new day, a new life, a whole new way of existence.

Because Christ is risen, we too, will one day rise to life eternal. But let's not forget, because Christ is risen, we can also rise above the disappointments, the sorrows, and the pain of this life by embracing the transforming grace that Jesus brings. Because of Easter, while we are not yet who we will become, we are no longer who we were. God is not done molding us and shaping us into the Resurrection people he wants us to be.

This Easter, listen for Jesus to call you by name and step out with him into the dawn of the new life he offers.

Alleluia, Christ is Risen. The Lord is Risen indeed.

The Very Rev. Ryan S. Reed, SSC
Dean of the Cathedral

Psalm 114. Isaiah 55:1-11. Romans 6:3-11. Matthew 28:1-10.



2013 LENTEN SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

Stations of the Cross

Our regular schedule of daily services is offered throughout Lent in addition to Stations of the Cross.
Stations of the Cross & Sermon is followed by a light Lenten Meal at 6:45 p.m.
The Nursery is available.

Wednesday, February 20th 6:00 p.m.	Rev. Gregory Crosthwait St. Mark's, Arlington	Meal prepared by Justin Midgley-Snow
Wednesday, February 27th 6:00 p.m.	The Rt. Rev. Jack L. Iker, D.D., SSC Bishop III of Fort Worth	Meal prepared by the Missions Committee
Wednesday, March 6th 6:00 p.m.	Rev. Edward Kresowaty St. Alban's, Arlington	Meal prepared by the Women's Fellowship
Wednesday, March 13th 6:00 p.m.	Rev. Christopher Cantrell St. Matthias', Dallas	Meal prepared by the AYC
Wednesday, March 20th 6:00 p.m.	Rev. Ron Drummond St. Stephen's, Hurst	Meal Prepared by the Vestry

Holy Week Services

The Nursery is available for all services during Holy Week.

Monday, March 25th 7:00 p.m.	Holy Eucharist
Tuesday, March 26th 10:30 a.m.	Mass of Collegiality
Tuesday, March 26th 7:00 p.m.	Holy Eucharist
Wednesday, March 27th 7:00 p.m.	Holy Eucharist
Thursday, March 28th 7:30 p.m.	Maundy Thursday Service
Friday, March 29th 7:30 p.m.	Good Friday Liturgy
Saturday, March 30th Sunset (approximately 8:00 p.m.)	Easter Vigil
Sunday, March 31st 7:30 a.m. 9:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m.	Easter Sunday Holy Eucharist Choral Eucharist

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